

## ***Environment, Engagement & Equity Committee Summary Minutes***

**3/21/2022**

**Committee Members Present:** Dimple Ajmera (Chairwoman), Renee Johnson (Vice-Chair), Braxton Winston

**Staff Resources Present:** Sarah Hazel, Federico Rios, Rebecca Hefner, Willie Ratchford

**Additional Staff Presenters:** Katie Rhodes, Phil Reiger, Victoria Johnson, Terry Bradley

Chair Dimple Ajmera began the EEE committee meeting with introductions of committee members and staff.

### **Strategic Energy Action Plan 2021 Report**

Chair Dimple Ajmera highlighted work that has been done to advance the SEAP in 2021.

Committee members received a presentation from Phil Reiger, Director of General Services, Sarah Hazel, Chief Sustainability and Resiliency Officer and Kathryn Rhodes, Strategic Energy Action Plan Project Manager. Kathryn shared highlights from the 2021 Strategic Energy Action Plan Yearly Report, including progress towards the city's 2030 zero-carbon buildings goals, solar installation, electric vehicles, and electric vehicle charging, as well as how equity is embedded in several SEAP-focused projects.

Chair Ajmera asked to ensure that vehicle charging infrastructure is spread out throughout the city and not just in some parts. She also noted public-private partnerships will be important in reaching the goals. Chair Ajmera asked for a list of all public charging stations and noted it will take everyone's efforts to ensure a low-carbon future for Charlotte. Vice-Chair Renee Johnson also requested that the electric vehicle charging infrastructure map include districts.

Councilmember Braxton Winston shared that the ability to get funding from the federal infrastructure law is going to require using an equity lens. He also noted that this may be a substantial bucket of resources that could be coming our way. He added that with the work that staff is currently doing can be greatly expanded if we are awarded funds.

Councilmember Winston requested an update on where heavy-duty low-carbon fleet technology is now versus when the SEAP was first adopted.

Vice-Chair Renee Johnson asked what's one thing that the community can do right now that would have an impact on the environment, and subsequently City staff shared a list that can be

found on [charlottenc.gov/seap](http://charlottenc.gov/seap) about everyday actions people can take to lower their carbon emissions.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Program Update**

Committee members then received a presentation from Victoria Johnson, Special Assistant to the City Manager, Willie Ratchford, Community Relations Committee Director and Terry Bradley, Deputy Director of the Community Relations Committee. They presented an update on the ADA program and transition plan, including community engagement, timeline of progress, and key components of the plan to address accessibility, such as: City facilities, public right-of-way, City staffing and programs, City website, and City services.

Vice-Chair Renee Johnson asked for more information and dates for open houses and presentations. Terry Bradley clarified and asked for an update on the request for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at council meetings. Vice-Chair Johnson also asked that a link to ADA information be shared with the community.

Terri Bradley shared that the city has an online portal that is always open for feedback. Terry also shared that ASL interpreters have been requested at additional meetings and staff is working on that item.

Councilmember Braxton Winston also noted that Charlotte should determine how to structure meetings from an ADA perspective.

### **Equity in Governance Framework**

Committee members received a presentation from Federico Rios, Assistant Director, Office of Equity, Mobility, and Immigrant Integration. Federico shared a draft Equity in Governance Framework, engagement approach, and equity tool for Committee feedback. The framework included using an equity lens to address council priorities and the types of approaches, such as using data, engagement, and partnerships, to create equitable and thriving communities.

Next steps outlined include finalize a draft framework and share with City Council and then moving forward - an engagement strategy to refine framework and tool.

Chair Dimple Ajmera shared that it is very important to provide feedback on this checklist. She would like to add the following question to the checklist: how can we mitigate any negative impact that a proposal may have in communities?

Chair Ajmera also noted it would be great to work with an Equity Steering Team or advisory group in order to be intentional to reach out to all stakeholders.

Vice-Chair Johnson shared the importance of looking at geography, when asking questions to make sure all areas of Charlotte are receiving benefits. She talked about how the city should work to remove unintended consequences as much as possible.

Council member Braxton Winston asked staff to look at the equity in governance approach and change council priorities to council responsibilities. He wants to ensure the city not only recognizes the past but addresses inequities that were created and builds from there.

Vice-Chair Renee Johnson suggested looking at economic development and employer recruitment through an equity lens.